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Timpe, ed., METAPHYSICS AND THE GOOD: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ELEONORE STUMP

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subject knows that there is really no evidence for ultimism. If there is no evidence for the truth of ultimism, questions can be raised about whether such wilful assenting is psychologically too demanding to uphold. Our reasons for belief in the desirability of ultimism need to be extremely good to make the continuous effort of exercising our imagination worthwhile. Schellenberg answers this objection to some extent (chapter 3) by claiming that imagination combined with different kinds of religious practices is enough to support commitment in ultimism without belief. But if this is the case, what would motivate the faithful ultimist to engage in (sceptical) religious practices in the first place, if not some kind of belief? It is difficult to see where the initial motivation comes from if not from some kind of intuition or evidence “that there might be (some) truth to religion.”

Despite these open questions and issues, it must be acknowledged that Schellenberg has indeed been able to create a truly alternative position to those currently motivating most philosophy of religion. By doing so, he is deeply grounded in a tradition of Western philosophy that emphasises the pragmatic and non-evidential aspect of religion and also represents a contemporary reinvigoration of this tradition.

Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump, edited by Kevin Timpe. New York: Routledge, 2009. 262 pages. \$126 (hardback).

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The fourteen essays in this collection illustrate the range of interests of Eleonore Stump, in whose honor they have been written. While it would be impossible in a review to give a proper assessment of every paper, I shall pick out some contrasting examples with a view to saying something about the development of the discipline under Stump's influence, illustrated by the collection as a whole.

Some of the essays here display a degree of precision which even the most demanding analytic philosopher could not fault. Brian Leftow's "Aquinas, Divine Simplicity and Divine Freedom" and Thomas Flint's "Fittingness and Divine Action in *Cur Deus Homo*" are careful, dense, and acute discussions of some very knotty problems.

In order to get to grips with his chosen problem, as a problem within the Thomist system (though certainly not only within that system), Leftow has to get to grips with Aquinas's logical presuppositions, which include the idea that events become necessary when they are in the past. Leftow is to be commended for making clear (if not simple) the relationship between what Aquinas says, and the way we might express it.

This is a mere prologue, however, to the actual problem of divine simplicity and freedom, which turns on whether and in what precise way, God might differ in different possible worlds, on Thomist principles. This

involves an understanding of the Thomist account of properties, not all of which are essential or accidental forms. Again, Leftow is admirably clear, sympathetic to his sources, but relentless in his questioning of proposed solutions.

Flint's discussion has much in common with Leftow's, in approach. He addresses a problem discussed by Anselm, of how the Incarnation could be fitting for God to do, without it being necessary for Him to do. Flint attempts to capture Anselm's assumptions, which drive the problem Anselm addresses and the solutions Anselm proffers, in modal logic, which serves to make precise the issues at play in Anselm's argument.

Interestingly both these papers conclude that the solutions they have had time to examine do not work, though it is possible that others might. This, of course, is part of the price one pays for this philosophical approach: by eschewing short cuts, one may not get to one's destination.

Two other papers explore areas of Thomistic philosophical theology: Jason T. Eberl's "Do Persons Exist between Death and Resurrection?," and Christopher Brown's "Friendship in Heaven: Aquinas on Supremely Perfect Happiness and the Communion of the Saints." Both discussions are well done, and exemplify the way philosophy can clarify the issues in an arena where philosophy and theology interact.

C. P. Ragland's paper "Love and Damnation" provides an interesting exploration of some theories of hell. One is the notion (related to C. S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*) that damned individuals are more "psychic remains" than persons, since their life of wickedness has destroyed their personality. Another is Stump's intriguing argument that in allowing the souls of those damned (for example) because of the sin of anger to continue to rage in hell, God is allowing them their greatest possible degree of actualisation, given the state of their personality by that stage. Ragland argues that God would not have more reason to maintain either "psychic remains" or the raging soul in existence, rather than annihilate them, if the only consideration was the good of the individual. Ragland goes on to suggest that a loving God would only leave souls in some form of hell if there was hope for their moral improvement.

It is a pity that Ragland's discussion misses out on what appear to be two central features of the traditional understanding of hell, namely that it is justice, rather than love, which is the leading consideration, and that it is our earthly life, to the exclusion of our life after death, which is the sphere of choice, and where sin and merit are alone possible.

Michael C. Rea's paper, "Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God" examines a problem which parallels that of the problem of evil: if God exists, and loves us, why does He seem to be hidden from us? Rea makes the point that there is no valid inference from God's silence to God's lack of concern for us or His non-existence, but continues: "The pressing question, of course, is what to do with the fact that God's silence is painful for us."¹

¹Michael Rea, "Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God," in *Metaphysics and God*, 83.

Rea's positive suggestions, at the end of the paper, that Biblical narrative and the liturgy are ways of having, in a certain sense, a mediated or vicarious experience of God, are interesting ones. We might think, however, that what is really needed is something from another discipline altogether: that of mystical theology or spirituality.

Rea illustrates the painfulness of God's hiddenness with a quotation from the diaries of Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "the reality of darkness & coldness & emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul."² Rea is aware that this is a widely recorded experience, but does not address the explanation for it given by the spiritual tradition in which Mother Teresa wrote.³ This would be that she was experiencing that "dark night of the soul" which enables the more spiritually advanced to purify their love of God of self-gratification, such as might become associated with it when one's experience of God is generally warm and consoling.

The assessment of this explanation of Mother Teresa's experience, and that of others like her, is something which philosophy, analytic or not, is not qualified to attempt. The question of "what to do with" the phenomenology of the spiritual life is something which philosophers would do well to pass on to their colleagues in the theology department.

A parallel difficulty is presented in Timothy O'Connor's paper "Theodicies and Human Nature: Dostoevsky on the Saint as Witness." The article examines the problem of evil as set out in literary form by Dostoevsky and Camus, and the literary response made by Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's character Ivan would reject any putative "upheaval" in which it turns out the apparently pointless suffering of the innocent was necessary for some greater good, and which allows a reconciliation and forgiveness of all things. Ivan says

I don't want it, out of love for mankind. I prefer to remain with my un-avenged suffering and my unappeased anger—even if I happen to be wrong. I feel, moreover, that such harmony is rather overpriced.⁴

The resolution of this problem, by Dostoevsky, is (O'Connor suggests) in the form of the "saint," the character the Elder Zossima, who embodies the gradual conversion of heart which makes it possible to accept the reconciliation which God is taken to be preparing. Zossima's testimony has weight, O'Connor explains, because Zossima himself converted from being "an angry, self-absorbed soldier" to the exceptionally gentle monk encountered in the book.⁵ The answer to Ivan seems to be that if Ivan were to allow grace to have its effect on him he, too, might find that he could accept the grand reconciliation planned by God.

²Ibid, 81.

³Ibid, 82.

⁴Timothy O'Connor, "Theodicies and Human Nature: Dostoevsky on the Saint as Witness," in *Metaphysics and God*, 177.

⁵Ibid, 184.

Dostoevsky's readers will find this compelling to the degree that they find Zossima (and the rest of the book) psychologically plausible. Whether the book is satisfying at the literary level—at the level of its effect on its readers—is a question for literary critics, however, not for philosophers. Philosophers would do better to look for argumentative, not literary, force, and do what O'Connor does not do, and attempt a philosophical analysis of Ivan's appeal.

In doing this we might note Ivan's concern with justice, and his claim is that some cozy reconciliation between the mother of the child torn to pieces by the landlord's dogs and the landlord is wrong. This is presumably because Ivan wants to see some kind of retributive restoration of justice, of which he sees the Christian response as a saccharine evasion. Furthermore, he rejects the use being made of the suffering of children for a greater good, seeing that, again, as unjust.

It seems that Ivan's "rebellion" is really against two popular claims: that God permits suffering only in order to bring about a greater good, and that everyone will in the end be saved. Ivan's point is that this minimization of suffering, regardless of whether it is of the innocent or of the guilty, comes at the cost of justice.

If we are impressed by Ivan's argument, we can keep those claims out of our response to the problem of evil. Thus we could say that God permits the infliction of suffering on the innocent by the wicked not because each act of torture (or whatever) will necessarily give rise to a greater good, but simply because He has adopted a policy of permitting human free will to work out its consequences, perhaps within some limits, as the only way of preserving the great good of free will and the meaningful relationships and human projects it makes possible. Furthermore, if a traditional understanding of divine justice is accepted, it is possible to share Ivan's expectation that in a just universe there will be no reconciliation by cheap grace, but some combination of atonement, repentance and punishment. This may, of course, leave the position vulnerable to other criticisms, but at this point we are moving beyond the problem presented by Dostoevsky.

To generalize about this collection, one distinction which could be made would be between papers in which the theological principles are fixed, and those where they are up for grabs. The papers in this collection which deal with problems within the works of Thomas Aquinas (those of Leftow, Eberl, and Brown) or of Anselm (that of Flint) are examples of the former approach. By holding the theology fixed, it is possible to see how varying the philosophical claims in detail can make the overall position more harmonious. If it can be shown that there is no way to resolve a philosophical problem created by a given set of theological assumptions, that would serve as an implicit critique of the theology.

By contrast, Ragland's treatment of hell is an example of a discussion in which philosophical and theological assumptions are alike at issue. This introduces an additional degree of complexity into the discussion, and paradoxically it increases the danger that theological assumptions will be

smuggled into the discussion without comment or justification. Ragland's rejection of the widespread theological claim that the earthly life is the sole sphere of choice, though central to Ragland's argument, is never articulated, let alone justified.

While it is tempting to vary the theological elements of a doctrine in order to solve philosophical problems, it should be remembered that theological claims need theological justification. It is one thing for a philosopher to say "This combination of theological (or scientific) claims is philosophically problematic"; it is quite another to say "This theological (or scientific) claim ought to be accepted for philosophical reasons."

One way to keep these problems within some limits is for a philosophical discussion of topics such as hell, the incarnation, providence, or the Trinity to be prefaced with an acknowledgement that the discussion will take for granted, insofar as it is possible, the theological understanding of the doctrine in some reasonably specific and (ideally) familiar tradition: mainstream traditional Christianity may be specific enough in some cases, though not in others. A parallel point holds about philosophy's interaction with other disciplines, including science, religious experience, and literature. It is certainly not the case that an interdisciplinary approach, which Stump is credited with promoting, is wrong in principle; rather, openness to interdisciplinary projects requires more, not less, awareness of what kind of argument and what kind of claim are proper to each discipline.

Tradition and Imagination: Revelation and Change, by David Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 402 pages. \$140.00 (hardback), \$50.00 (paperback).

Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth, by David Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 438 pages. \$49.99 (paperback).

God and Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience, by David Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 436 pages. \$55.00 (paperback).

God and Grace of Body: Sacrament in Ordinary, by David Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 446 pages. \$75.00 (hardback), \$35.00 (paperback).

God and Mystery in Words: Experience through Metaphor and Drama, by David Brown. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 288 pages. \$35.00 (paperback).

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The last book of David Brown's to be reviewed in this journal was *The Divine Trinity*, published in 1985 by Duckworth in the UK and Open Court in the US. Eleonore Stump began her review by stating that this "is an important book which I hope will influence the direction of certain work